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Lucia A Keegan 11/14/2006 11:30:54 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

Cable  
Text:

UNCLAS PARIS 07327

SIPDIS  
cyparis:  
ACTION: AGR  
INFO: UNESCO SCI POL ECNO DCM AMB ECON TRDO

DISSEMINATION: AGRX  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AGR: MMEADOR  
DRAFTED: AGR: MCHENARD  
CLEARED: ECON: SDWYER SCI:RDRY

VZCZCFRI002  
RR RUEHC RUEHRC RUCNMEM RUEHMRE RUEHSR RUEHGV  
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DE RUEHFR #7327 3131342  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 091342Z NOV 06  
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3016  
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES  
RUEHMRE/AMCONSUL MARSEILLE 1434  
RUEHSR/AMCONSUL STRASBOURG 0246  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2523  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

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SIPDIS

BRUSSELS PASS USEU FOR AGMINCOUNSELOR  
STATE FOR OES; EUR/ERA AND EB (SPIRNAK);  
STATE PASS USTR FOR MURPHY;  
USDA/OS/JOHANNIS/TERPSTRA;  
USDA/FAS FOR OA/YOST/SIMMONS/JONES;  
ITP/SHEIKH/MACKE/MIKE WOOLSEY/GREGG YOUNG; ROBERT CURTIS  
GFD/RIEMENSCHNEIDER/RADLEK/BURDETT  
FAA/YOUNG;  
EU POSTS PASS TO AGRICULTURE AND ECON  
GENEVA FOR USTR, ALSO AGRICULTURE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [EU](#) [FR](#)  
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE ESCALATES AROUND BIOTECH CORN

¶1. Summary: On November 4, anti biotech activists, including Jose Bove, damaged 2,000 MT of GM corn worth at least 365,000 Euros at a farm near Bordeaux. The concerned farmer reacted by firing shots in the air and using his vehicle to damage demonstrators' vehicles. While the police briefly detained the farmer, Jose Bove was held in custody for 38 hours. The French Minister of Agriculture and French farm organizations strongly criticized the demonstrators' acts of vandalism. End Summary.

¶2. On November 4, anti-biotech activists, led by Jose Bove, contaminated 2,000 MT of GM corn drying in a silo located in the Bordeaux region. Contamination resulted from the spraying of a colored liquid on the corn. The activists also labeled the silo "GMO." The silo and corn belong to one of the largest biotech corn farmers in France. The corn was a Pioneer GM variety and had been presold to a Spanish operator. The damage is estimated at 360,000 euros by the French MinAg, and 450,000 euros by Pioneer.

¶3. After discovering the damage, the farmer fired shots in the air near the demonstrators and subsequently used his car to damage four of the demonstrators' cars. Both the farmer and Jose Bove went to the police to file complaints. While the police briefly detained the farmer, they kept Jose Bove in custody for 38 hours.

¶4. The French farmers union (FNSEA) and several French growers associations (ORAMA and AGPM), declared they would legally defend the farmer and warned that farmers' exasperation with anti-GMO activists could lead to more violent incidents.

¶5. In a November 6 press release, French Minister of Agriculture Bussereau stated that the GM corn in question was grown legally in France. He strongly condemned the actions of Jose Bove and his group, qualifying them as "premeditated acts of vandalism," and "contrary to the rule of law and property rights." On the other hand, Segolene Royal, currently campaigning to be the Socialist Presidential candidate, stated on November 5 that "Jose Bove's fight is a good fight." Ms. Royal is aggressively against green biotechnology and promises to stop commercial production of GM crops in France if elected. In his press statement, Minister Bussereau noted -- implicitly referring to Ms. Royal's statement -- that "the least that one can expect from a candidate to the French presidency is that he/she "would not call into question legal authority and encourage vandalism."

Stapleton